UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.: GENERAL

E/ECA/CM.15/42
28 March 1989

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Tenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
27 March - 3 April 1989

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-fourth session of the Commission/ fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
6-10 April 1989

LC/NBIDS

SPECIAL MEMORANDUM BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF IDEP ON THE FUTURE OF IDEP

1. We, the members of the Governing Council of the United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) meeting at the thirty-first session of the Council from 20 to 22 March 1989 in Addis Ababa, have carefully reviewed the past and present activities of the Institute, particularly its future prospects, in the light of the decision by UNDP to withdraw the assistance it has been giving to the Institute's core training activities for over 25 years now.

2. In this regard, we deem it necessary to recall that the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) was established in 1963 by resolution 58 (IV) of the ECA Conference of Ministers with the mandate to train specialists and senior officials of those services and institutions in Africa responsible for economic development and planning. Specifically, the Institute was charged with undertaking four main interdependent activities: training, research, advisory services and supportive activities in the form of conferences, seminars and workshops.

3. We are aware that IDEP, right from its inception, though a United Nations institution, never benefitted from resources of the United Nations regular budget. As a result, it has had to depend heavily on UNDP for support not only for its operational activities but also for its regular activities.

4. Bearing in mind the need for member States to complement UNDP resources, the ECA Conference of Ministers in resolution 285 (XII) adopted on 28 February 1975, decided that member States provide a total of $US 1 million per year. This amount was later raised to $US 1,600,000 by resolution 433 (XVII) of 30 April 1982. In spite of this commitment the member States have not fulfilled all their obligations to IDEP, and their effective contributions dwindled from $US 600,000 in 1982 to only $US 245,000 in 1985. Although contributions in 1988 rose to $US 450,000 there is still a substantial accumulation of arrears in contributions.

5. As a result, IDEP has had to rely to a large extent on the resources of UNDP to be able to implement its programmes. On its part, UNDP has been reducing its funding for IDEP's programmes until 1988 when it gave the final warning of its intention to withdraw its assistance at the end of 1989. It is however pertinent to recall that article IX of the statute of the Institute states, inter alia, that "the Institute shall derive its finances from contributions made by African Governments and by UNDP".

6. Considering that the non-payment of contributions by member States, coupled with the withdrawal of UNDP assistance, would provoke the sudden collapse of the Institute at a time when it needs to expand its capacity in order to assist member States in their search for solutions to their economic development problems.

7. We reiterate our unreserved interest in the invaluable service rendered by the Institute to member States in the field of economic development, particularly in the training of specialists in this field, the organization of conferences and the provision of advisory services. Over the years, the Institute has trained a substantial number of nationals from various member States, some of whom currently hold key positions not only in their own countries but also at the international level.

8. The real threat facing IDEP is its imminent collapse if UNDP withdraws its assistance. In the face of this threat, we feel obliged, as members of the Governing Council, and therefore custodians of the Institute, to alert the ECA Conference of Ministers and humbly inform all concerned of the danger confronting the Institute and to launch a formal appeal to all concerned to do all in their power to prevent the collapse of the Institute.

9. In the circumstances, we appeal to African member States:

(a) Urgently pay without delay their assessed contributions for 1989 as well as the arrears in installments as recommended by resolutions of the Conference of Ministers;

(b) Give every support to and follow-up IDEP's efforts in the UNDP Governing Council, ECOSOC, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly or any other fora in the search for funds for its activities;

(c) Request the Chairman of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission and fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers, the Executive Secretary of ECA and the management of IDEP to contact the Administrator of UNDP and the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and inform them of the predicament of IDEP with the threatened withdrawal of UNDP assistance, and consider together with them the immediate implementation of the provisions and measures recommended in this memorandum.

10. The Governing Council would like to draw UNDP's attention to article IX of the statute of the Institute and urge the Administrator to continue to support IDEP in line with that article and appeal to UNDP to:

(a) Assist IDEP to establish its own facilities for carrying out the new activities proposed in the field of research, consultancy and advisory services, in order to reduce its dependence on the traditional resources;

(b) Subcontract to IDEP some of the consultancy assignments which it allocates to other agencies to execute for fees.

11. Appeals to the United Nations Secretary-General to submit to the United Nations General Assembly as a matter of urgency the funding of the core staff of IDEP by the United Nations regular budget for the biennium 1990-1991 and to make every attempt to ensure that from the biennium 1992-1993 onwards IDEP's budget is fully integrated into the United Nations regular budget as has been done for similar institutes in other regions.

12. Appeals to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to increase its assistance in human and financial resources to IDEP.

We hope that concerted efforts by all concerned, as already specified in the present memorandum, will make it possible for IDEP to attain its objectives. We attach a draft resolution for consideration and adoption by the ECA Conference of Ministers.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
(IDEP)

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling its resolution 285 (XII) of 28 February 1975, 433 (XVII) of 30 April 1982, 574 (XXI) of 19 April 1986, 612 (XXII) of 24 April 1987 and 622 (XXIII) of 15 April 1988 on the financing and future development of the Institute,

Recalling also ECOSOC resolution 185/62 which recommended regular budget posts for IDEP,

Noting with great satisfaction the achievements of the Institute and the services it has rendered and continues to render to the African Governments and the increasing and continued interest of member States in its activities,

Appreciative of the invaluable assistance made by African Governments, UNDP, ECA and other organizations and institutions to IDEP,

Considering the critical financial crisis facing the Institute, the decline of the contributions of member States, and UNDP's decision to withdraw its assistance for training at IDEP and funding of the core staff of IDEP at the end of 1989,

1. Urges the Administrator of UNDP to reconsider UNDP's decision at a time when African countries are facing critical financial problems and continue to support the Institute during the 1990-1991 biennium in line with Article IX of the Statute of the Institute, until other modalities for improving the Institute's financial capabilities including the charging of tuition fees for courses and the incorporation of IDEP's posts into the United Nations regular budget and other measures are worked out;

2. Appeals to the United Nations General Assembly to approve the incorporation of four core posts at IDEP in the regular budget in accordance with ECOSOC resolution 185/62 to enable the Institute to carry out its functions on a regular and sustained basis as in the case of counterpart United Nations institutions in other regions;

3. Earnestly requests African Governments to pay their contributions in a regular and timely manner as a matter of urgency as well as make plans to pay gradually their accumulated arrears;

4. Calls upon African member States to support the Institute's request for funding for the implementation of its medium-term plan and in particular support IDEP's request for assistance in the governing bodies of international organizations such as the Governing Council of UNDP, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, etc.;

5. Requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to set in motion action for streamlining and restructuring of the administration and finances of IDEP to make it affordable by African Governments and the work programme of IDEP to align it with the needs of African Governments;

6. Requests the Chairman of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission and fifteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, the Executive Secretary of ECA, and the management of IDEP to inform the UNDP Administrator of the need for UNDP to continue to support IDEP for at least two years and to stress to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation the urgent need to incorporate the budget of IDEP's core staff in the regular budget of the United Nations.